

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-11 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 SCCT-02 SY-04 OPR-02 PM-07 H-03

L-03 NSC-07 PA-04 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01

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R 171607Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8132

INFO USCINCSO

DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINS, AR

SUBJ: LEGALIST PERONIST LABOR LEADER ASSASSINATED

SUMMARY: ATILIO LOPEZ, LEFTIST CORDOBA LABOR LEADER, WAS ASSASSINATED MIDDAY SEPTEMBER 16. WAVE OF VIOLENCE INVOLVING OVER ONE HUNDRED BOMBINGS ETC. CLAIMS ADDITIONAL TWO LIVES. END SUMMARY.

1. ATILIO LOPEZ, EX-VICE GOVERNOR CORDOBA PROVINCE AND LEADER LEFTIST LEGALIST PERONIST LABOR SECTOR, WAS ASSASSINATED MIDDAY SEPT 16 AFTER BEING TAKEN FROM HIS BUENOS AIRES HOTEL BY UNKNOWN INDIVIDUALS WHO IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS POLICE. KILLED WITH LOPEZ WAS JUAN VARAS, UNION ADVISOR AND EX-SUBSECRETARY IN OPIEZ' GOVERNMENT. KILLING TOOK PLACE IN CAPILLA DEL SENOR, APPROXIMATELY 40 MILES FROM BUENOS AIRES. PRESS REPORTS THAT BODIES WERE MUTILATED BY APPROXIMATELY 130 BULLETS. THE NATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION (UTA) AND SEVERAL CORDOBA UNIONS

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DECLARED WORK STOPPAGES UNTIL AFTER BURIAL.

2. AS HEAD OF CORDOBA UTA UNION AND LEFTIST CONTROLLED CGT, LOPEZ WAS ACKNOWLEDGE LEADER OF LEFTIST PERONIST CORDOBA LABOR UNTIL AUG 16, 1974 WHEN HE LOST UTA UNION ELECTION TO ORTHODOX OPPONENT. ELECTED VICE-GOVERNOR IN 1973 ELECTIONS UNDER JUSTICIALIST BANNER, LOPEZ REJECTED COOPERATION WITH ORTHODOX PERONIST LABOR SECTOR AND COLLABORATED WITH COMBATIVE, TROTSKYITE UNIONS HEADED BY TOSCO AND SALAMANCA. HE LOST HIS VICE-GOVERNORSHIP AFTER THE FEBRUARY 27 POLICE REBELLION WHICH TOPPLED THE CORDOBA GOVERNMENT OF OBREGON CANO. ALTHOUGH STILL HEAD OF LEGALIST PERONIST LABOR MOVEMENT AT TIME OF HIS DEATH, LOPEZ HAD WITHDRAWN HIS COLLABORATION FROM OTHER LEFTIST CORDOBA LABOR SECTORS, WHICH SHARPLY CRITICIZED HIM FOR THE "TREASON".

3. IN ADDITION TO ASSASSINATION OF LOPEZ AND VARAS, A WAVE OF BOMBINGS HAS SWEEPED OVER ARGENTINE IN RECENT DAYS (SEP 14-16). MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED INCIDENTS WERE RECORDED AS TERRORISTS USED MOLOTOV COCKTAILS AND OTHER EXPLOSIVE DEVICES AGAINST A VARIETY OF TARGETS. THE MAJORITY OCCURRED IN THE BUENOS AIRES AREA. AUTO DEALERS, INCLUDING SEVERAL IKA-RENAULT DEALERS, AND BANKS WERE MOST FREQUENTLY HIT. IKA-RENAULT HAS BEEN TROUBLED BY SEVERE LABOR DIFFICULTIES RECENTLY. AT LEAST TWO CHEVROLET AND ONE FORD CONCESSIONAIRE WERE ALSO BOMBED. THE BOMBINGS CAUSED THE DEATH OF TWO PERSONS AND INJURY TO AT LEAST FOUR MORE.

4. THE CHILEAN EMBASSY WAS BOMBED AND SHOT AT ON TWO SEPARATE OCCASIONS SEP 14-15. CHILEAN AMBASSADOR COMPLAINED TO AMBASSADOR HILL ABOUT A RELUCTANCE ON PART OF GOA OFFICIALS TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SECURITY. HOWEVER, EMBOFFS HAVE OBSERVED THAT STREET IS NOW BLOCKED, AND A TRUCK WITH RIOT-EQUIPPED POLICE IS STATIONED IN FRONT OF CHILEAN EMBASSY.

5. COMMENT: IT IS NOT CLEAR, AND MAY NEVER BE, WHETHER RIGHT OR LEFT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR LOPEZ' KILLING. WHILE IDENTIFIED WITH LEFTIST GROUPS, AND THEREFORE PRESUMABLY KILLED BY RIGHISTS, HIS ERSTWHILE COMRADES MAY HAVE KILLED HIM FOR HIS "TREASONS". CGT OFFICIAL TOLD LABATT THAT CGT "IN DARK" AS TO IDENTITY RESPONSIBLE GROUP OR MOTIVES FOR KILLING. HE STRESSED THAT ASSASSINATION DID NOT FAVOR EFFORTS OF CGT ORTHODOX LEADERSHIP IN ONGOING CONFLICT WITH OPPOSITIONIST LABOR GROUPS.

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REGARDLESS OF RESPONSIBILITY, ASSASSINATION APPEARS TO BE ANOTHER OF THE SENSELESS KILLINGS WHICH HAVE CLAIMED SEVERAL LABOR AND POLITICAL LEADERS IN RECENT MONTHS. END COMMENT.

HILL

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Message Attributes

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